

Westchester Elementary

Welcome to Westchester Elementary School! As our vision statement says, we are “a diverse learning community that promotes the social, emotional and academic growth of all by fostering high expectations and effective communication.” Please enjoy a tour of our exceptional school by way of this narrative.

Before the school day starts, learning is already taking place. In the REACH (Revolving Enrichment and Challenge) room, kids of all grade levels and abilities are actively involved in Chess Club. In many classrooms, students in grades three through five are participating in math and reading extended day programs. The fourth grade audiovisual club is preparing for morning announcements, the Sunrise Singers are rehearsing in the music room, the fourth and fifth grade Safety Patrol members are heading outside to their duty posts, and Student Council members are setting up the school store. This is just the beginning of the incredible learning opportunities at Westchester.

Once the day begins, parent volunteers and teaching assistants work in the hall with small groups or individual students playing a math game, reading, or painting scenery for a play. In quiet places in our building, OASIS tutors and community mentors are reading stories or writing with their mentee students. You may see a class or two sprawled on the floor, sketching, observing, or writing about the animals in our atrium area.

In the classrooms, scientists summarize their findings from an experiment or sculpt their amphibian model out of clay. In all classrooms, authors craft their latest writing piece and confer with a teacher or peer. Students are engaged in a Socratic Seminar discussing current issues, or in a math congress sharing and defending their strategy for solving a math problem. Teachers work with individuals or small groups in their special education classrooms or push in to the regular education classroom to support learners in that environment. On a school family day, cross grade level groups, including each student and adult in our building, participate in community building activities. Scientists are outside collecting insects in Westchester Woods. Experimenters are outside on the slide, testing materials for friction. The physical education class is going through the low ropes course, a class is searching for shapes in the playground equipment, artists are sketching trees in the woods, and a class is taking advantage of the benches in the woods during reader’s workshop.

Lunch and recess times are also full of learning and social growth opportunities. Students, who might otherwise be sedentary, walk around the playground as part of Westchester Walkers’ Club. Other students meet together with adults in self-esteem building groups like Sista Girls, Girl Power, Art Club, Honor Choir, or Student Council. Students confer with teachers during lunch or recess to get additional help when needed. A teacher might be having lunch with a group of students in order to solidify their connections to each other.

Westchester Elementary School is a special place. Students care about each other and their school. Teachers and staff members are invested in our community of learners, and do whatever it takes to meet the unique academic and social needs of all of our students. Administrators trust and empower teachers. We reflect on what works best for our kids and continually grow and change to meet the needs of our diverse population. Westchester parents and community members support the learning that happens here with their time and involvement. The result is a learning community where all members are valued, learning is individualized, and children are loved, supported, challenged, and celebrated.